

Community News

Scouts use JSC club's radio gear to contact Mir during jamboree

By Lane McFarlane

What do scouting, JSC, and amateur radio have in common? Jamboree On The Air or JOTA!

The JSC Amateur Radio Club participated in the International Scout Bureau Jamboree On The Air this year from the JSCARC station near the Gilruth Center.

JOTA is organized by the World Scout Bureau to expose boys and girls in the scouting movement to the magic of technology and radio communications. It also allows scouts from all over to talk to each other in a virtual jamboree.

The radio side is handled by amateur radio operators (or "ham" operators as they are sometimes called), usually those who also are involved in scouting. OTA has been sponsored by the World Scout Bureau since 1957, and is promoted by the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of America in this country. It has traditionally taken place on the third weekend of October. Large groups in California and New York, as well as smaller groups get on the air each year to get the scouts talking.

This year, a JOTA participation was hosted by the JSC Amateur Radio Club and the Bayshore District of the Sam Houston Area Council, Boy Scouts of America. The station was staffed by Lane MacFarlane and Matt Bordelon, with scout leader assistance from Mike Veres.

The team had the JSC club's radio station up and running promptly at 9 a.m. for the beginning of the event. The scouts started the day with a tour

around the station's radios and antenna farm, and then got to work on the air.

The scouts spent the morning talking to stations in Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Michigan, Maryland, and even Canada, on the JSCARC's radio equipment.

The Scouts also got to see the JSCARC's extensive collection of "QSL" cards, postcards that ham operators send to each other to confirm that they have made contact by radio. The club has cards from all over the United States and the world. The scouts got a bang out of the more humorously decorated cards.

The high point of the day came in the afternoon. At 1:20 p.m., the Russian Space Station Mir flew right over Houston with American astronaut David Wolf aboard. Ham operators regularly talk to Mir, including a group from the JSC club. This Saturday happened to be one of their scheduled communication passes, and the scouts were in for a treat.

JSCARC members Karl Silverman and Kent Castle were on hand to make contact. The group watched as the computer-controlled satellite antennas started tracking Mir as it passed overhead. After the preliminary radio contact was established, two Scouts were able to make contact and talk with Wolf.

All in all, the scouts reported having a good time, and are expected to remember it for years to come.

For details on the JSC Amateur Radio Club, contact the president, Karl Silverman, Code ZS8, at x31047.

USA employees share spirit of giving with St. Nicholas program

Each year children are filled with the joy and happiness that comes with annual Christmas-time activities. But thousands who are less fortunate depend on the giving spirit of those who help to make the Houston St. Nicholas program successful.

United Space Alliance celebrated its St. Nicholas Day this month, coming together to provide gifts for children who often are missing something in their lives.

For many of the children, it was a day of gifts and surprises that they will not have again throughout the

rest of the year.

USA employees helped by providing time and effort. About 100 volunteers helped assemble gift bags for this event during a packing party in the USA cafeteria on Nov. 12. About 20 employees delivered the gifts and toys to South Houston Elementary School and helped in decorating the school classrooms on Dec. 4. The morning of Dec. 5, the volunteers had an opportunity to visit the school and help as the students experienced the joy of receiving and learn a little more about the important lesson of giving.



Photo courtesy Boeing

Steve Berry, far left, presents a \$10,000 Boeing donation to Carol and Hurt Porter, founders of Kid-Care, the nation's first meals-on-wheels program geared specifically for children. Kid-Care currently prepares and delivers more than 21,000 meals each month to the doorsteps of Houston's hungry children.

Boeing employees donate \$10,000 to Kid-Care meals on wheels program

By Kari Kelley

Founders of the nation's first meals-on-wheels program geared specifically for children recently received a \$10,000 donation from the Boeing Employee Community Fund.

Kid-Care, founded in 1984 by Carol and Hurt Porter, currently prepares and delivers more than 21,000 meals each month to the doorsteps of Houston's hungry children. The mission of the not-for-profit agency is to end hunger among children in America, beginning with the greater Houston area; to address the holistic needs of the child (food, clothing, education, health and cultural) to end the cycle of poverty enabling them to be productive members of the community; and to empower other people throughout the world to implement Kid-Care programs in their communities.

Steve Berry, of the Boeing

Planning & Scheduling Technology team, presented the check on behalf of the Boeing Houston employees. He has been involved personally with Kid-Care since 1994. "I not only believe in what Kid-Care is doing to feed hungry kids, but I wholeheartedly support the way that they do it



by tapping into the city's spirit of compassion, generosity, and volunteerism," Berry said. "In addition, they do all this good work without any government or United Way funding. I am grateful to be part of a company whose employees care and support programs like Kid-Care."

While meals-on-wheels is the main focus, Kid-Care also administers other programs relating to chil-

dren's well-being.

"We believe strongly that our children must experience field trips, summer camps, and cultural outings to see what the future may hold," said Carol Porter. "These outings foster a deep desire and drive within the heart of children as they see how others live. They will also know that someone helped them in their journey and the spirit of giving back to the community will stay with them forever."

Boeing has been supporting Clear Lake and the greater Houston area for 30 years through corporate contributions, employee donations and volunteerism. This year, the employees "good neighbor fund" already has donated \$150,000 to the local community. For more information on Kid-Care contact Rudy LaBombarda at (713) 695-5437 or (800) 566-0084.

JSC Safety Alert

Use, Modification of Commercial-Off-the-Shelf Equipment

What Happened

Use and modification of commercial-off-the-shelf equipment in a manner not intended by the manufacturer was identified as the cause of a potential mishap by the Bldg. 7 Uninterruptible Power System Rigging Mishap Investigation Board.

A commercial data scanner, using a bank of reed relays, failed during thermal vacuum testing of the SEASAT-A Synthetic Aperture Radar Transmitter subassembly. The nature of the problem could have caused the failure to occur any time the sensor was operated with the ground support equipment as it was configured. The problem was caused by using a commercial piece of equipment without looking into its internal nature and considering the consequences to the flight equipment should an internal part fail.

The Drop Dynamics Module is a Class C experiment flown on the shuttle. On its first flight, one of the set of seven commercial power supplies failed when an internal short caused the main control breaker to trip.

Safety Implications

All COTS equipment used at JSC must be considered for its intended application, potential hazards and benefits.

What You Can Do

All JSC organizations, including contractors, when using or modifying COTS equipment, hardware, materials, or software in a manner not intended by the manufacturer must:

- Consult the manufacturer and identify hazards associated with the intended use.
- Perform the appropriate hazard and fault analyses related to the intended use.
- Mitigate all known or discovered hazards and document the acceptance of any residual risks.
- Conduct reviews to assure problem failure accountability, parts selection, materials and processes, environmental testing, quality assurance, and commercial equipment qualification.

JSC employee, family adopt three youngsters

By Kazuko Hall-Farley

The spirit of Christmas resides in the hearts of some families year-round. That's the case with JSC employee Ernie Romero and his family who recently welcomed four children into their home.

Romero, his wife Cheryl, daughter Sarita, 11, and son, Ernie Jr., 8, now share their meals and rooms with Teresa, 7, Vickie, 6, Sandor, 4, and Carlos, 3.

Romero, who works for Engineering's Manufacturing, Materials and Process Technology Division in Bldg. 9, recalls that they first decided to adopt more than two years ago. They had recently moved to a neighborhood with no other children on the block and were far from their family in California. They asked the kids if they wanted a boy or a girl with whom to play. Sarita immediately settled on a sister and Ernie Jr. a brother. Stumped at first, they soon decided to adopt one of each, hopefully a brother and sister pair. Romero and his wife wanted to help keep a family together if possible.

Soon, they were talking with social workers and looking for the appropriate match. Although many children need homes, the process was rigorous and difficult. Years passed.

Then, he read a newspaper article by Teresa. She shared that her biggest wish was to have parents to call mom and dad and her biggest fear was having her brothers and sister separated. Unfortunately, this fear was their certain fate since social workers couldn't find anyone to take the children. The plan was to separate the boys through different aunts and uncles and separate the girls by having them adopted by different families.

The couple felt something click inside and decided to go for it. It wasn't an easy process, but on Oct. 29, they brought Teresa, Vickie, Sandor and Carlos to their new home, their fourth and final placement. Things have certainly changed for the Romero family, definitely for the bigger and hopefully for the better.